

utilities to receive Forest Service approval for long-term transmission maintenance plans, allowing them to take immediate action to remove hazardous trees as soon as they are identified, before they cause a fire.

This is a widely supported rule by rural communities, rural electric cooperatives, and many others. It is a good bipartisan effort. Let's get it done.

THE SMITH FAMILY ACHIEVED THE AMERICAN DREAM THROUGH HARD WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, last month I had the privilege of meeting Lisa and Chad Smith and their charming son Jamil during a visit to Newland, North Carolina, in the Fifth District.

The Smiths are the proprietors of Forage Soaps, which began in 2014 with a \$50 purchase of supplies and a trip to the Avery County Farmers Market to sell their first batch of wild-crafted soaps made in their kitchen. Wild-crafted refers to plants collected from their natural or indigenous habitat. The Smiths handpicked these botanicals fresh from the trail with minimal environmental impact to ensure long-term sustainability.

Well, that first batch turned into a second batch and a third batch, and so on. As they continued to make soap, they bought better equipment and invested in larger orders of supplies. Word spread about their soap, and before they knew it, the Smiths were receiving invitations to attend craft and artisan shows. They were invited to put their soap in several local galleries, and it wasn't long before they were filling their first wholesale order.

Today their business includes a retail location that also functions as their studio as well as several small satellite locations and an online store. Chad works for Mountain Electric Cooperative full time, and Lisa has a master's degree in organic chemistry and biology. She has been making soap for more than 20 years.

The Smiths adopted Jamil when he was 18 months old. They were told he would never be able to speak and may never be able to walk. Today he does both and is attending school and thriving with their loving care. He even helps out with the business, where he loves to mix oils and wild-craft herbs. Their older children help with deliveries and during special events, while their grandchildren like to come on weekends to help stock shelves and run the cash register. It is truly a family affair.

Lisa likes to say she and Chad built their business one bar of soap at a time. They didn't take out business loans or expect to be an overnight suc-

cess. Instead, they started small and grew a little bit at a time, working long, hard hours, and eventually reinvesting in their business.

The Smiths are living proof that one can achieve the American Dream through hard work. It is an honor to represent them in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ).

THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise to speak on an issue important to so many Floridians, and that is the Florida Everglades. The Everglades are Florida. They are as iconic as the Blue Angels, the space shuttle, and even the orange. No one in Florida is unaffected by the fate of the Everglades. This is why I join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in encouraging President Trump to remain focused on Everglades restoration.

Congress has invested in these projects before, and the Everglades ecosystem is improving as a result. But there is debate about how to proceed. In short, the question is: Should the government buy more Everglades land?

I say no. Forty-two percent of the land in south Florida is already owned by the government. We should get the government out of the real estate business, not deeper into it.

Instead of a land buy, we must finish the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. Since 2000, this plan has enjoyed bipartisan support. Taxpayer dollars go toward important environmental work. The plan respects private property rights, doesn't harm agricultural communities who play a critical role in Florida's economies, and advances the cause of restoration.

Florida's Everglades are a national treasure. We can't afford to lose them. Finishing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan will ensure that our river of grass will be around for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I take particular pride in thanking both Congressmen ROONEYS from my State for their outstanding leadership.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1945

CONFIRMATION OF NEIL GORSUCH TO THE SUPREME COURT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to come to the floor this evening to coanchor the Congressional Black Caucus hour about the present nominee to the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch.

I am very pleased that my good friend from Texas, Representative SHEILA JACKSON LEE, a distinguished

member of the Judiciary Committee, has agreed to coanchor this hour with me.

Mr. Speaker, I am chair of the working group for the Congressional Black Caucus that looks at nominees for Federal courts. So, I have buried myself in the record of Neil Gorsuch and wrote the testimony that we submitted to the Senate.

What I will do is speak for a few minutes generally about the nominee, and then I will go to my good friend from Texas. I am very pleased that another good friend, Mr. DON PAYNE, Jr., is here from the State of New Jersey, and we will hear from him as well.

Now, just as the Congress has been polarized so has the court been polarized, if you look at the liberal and conservative blocks in that way. But, of course, since the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, there has been a 4-4 split. Justice Anthony Kennedy, who is still a Member of the Court is not always a predictable conservative, though he tends to vote with the conservatives.

What has happened in the Senate is entirely predictable, at least today. In an unprecedented move, the Senate refused to hear from or even meet the nominee of President Obama. There was almost a full year, yet the Senate refused to take up that nominee.

What happened today was not payback. If you listened to the testimony, you would see that there are good reasons why the Senate Democrats today decided to filibuster Judge Gorsuch.

I want to begin because I am speaking for the Congressional Black Caucus with his views as they affect African-Americans and, by definition, others who depend upon the antidiscrimination laws and the Constitution of the United States.

There is more than enough in the record on race related matters from Judge Gorsuch's 10th Circuit service to oppose his nomination. But let me focus for a moment on his pre-court service, which seems to have predicted what he would do in the court of appeals.

He was a principal deputy to the principal who had jurisdiction over the Civil Rights Division. We have to pay attention to the fact that the inspector general, during Judge Gorsuch's time in the Justice Department, found that the Civil Rights Division, where he had some oversight, had been politicized in order to stifle civil rights enforcement. As you might imagine, the Congressional Black Caucus had to pay attention to that finding by a neutral investigator.

We also are very concerned about how Gorsuch is a Justice Department Official treated a Georgia election law. As we know, election laws from the South—of course, there has been a historic decision that has made the Voting Rights Act far less effective than it was—but certainly during most of the time of the Act, Southern states had to go through the Justice Department to